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## POLITICAL EDUCATION IN INCREASING STUDENT PARTICIPATION AS NOVICE VOTERS IN SINGKAWANG CITY

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**Abstract.** Secondary education students are Indonesian citizens who are categorized as first-time novice voters who are participating in political activities for the first time. Political education can increase students' awareness and knowledge in participating in politics, both in schools and in elections. This study aims to find out and analyze how political education can increase students' political participation as novice voters. This research uses a Descriptive method with research techniques for questionnaires/Google Forms, Interviews, Observations, and Documentation Studies, in high schools students throughout Singkawang City. The findings obtained by the authors in this study are that students as novice voters need to understand the importance of political education and also support activities related to political education. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that political education for students in schools was carried out through *PPKn* subjects, student council activities (*OSIS*), Scout activities (*Pramuka*), and through election socialization conducted by the General Election Commission (*KPU*) of Singkawang City. Students who obtain such education, their political participation becomes increased. This is characterized by students being able to give opinions and arguing in the classroom, as well as having the awareness to participate and be active in organizations in the school. The political participation of students can also be seen from their readiness as novice voters, to take part in the 2024 general election.

Keywords: Political education; political partisipation; student; novice voter

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian state, which adheres to a democratic government, requires the people as the highest power holders in the country. The role of the people in democratic government is urgently needed in the progress of the nation and state. Every citizen is expected to involve himself to participate in state activities in order to create a democratic state life. According to Wuryan and Syaifullah (2008: 71) that: In a democratic country, citizen participation is the main or main requirement that every citizen must carry out in the political process. Realizing a democratic life will naturally experience obstacles when its citizens are not participatory in the decision-making processes and activities of their country. But on the contrary, if citizens are able to involve themselves or participate in the political decision-

making process, it will encourage the realization of a democratic society.

A democratic state requires the participation of its citizens, therefore people must be given political education so that people can understand their role as citizens in political activities and carry out political activities. For countries that adhere to the notion of democracy, elections or elections are a major party of democracy carried out by a country that uses the understanding of democracy. Elections are the way to uphold democracy.

In Indonesia, the means of self-declaration of the people and democracy to the state and government is manifested in the form of voting during elections. General elections can be said to be one of the means of democracy and a form of embodiment of people's sovereignty to produce aspirational, qualified, and responsible representatives of the people and

leaders for the welfare of the people. A very interesting category of voter groups to observe and research further is novice voters.

Novice Voters are first-time voters who will cast their ballots in an Election. As explained in Elections For Novice Voters Module I of the Indonesian General Election Commission (2013) the category of Novice Voters is a citizen who will exercise their right to vote for the first time in the activities of the General Election. They can come from Indonesian citizens who are even 17 years old or not yet 17 years old but have been married. In school age, novice voters are at the level of XI and XII grades of high schools.

The novice voters in the general election are a new generation of voters who have different traits and characters, backgrounds, experiences and challenges than the voters in the previous generation. Most of them are students, have good economic status, and generally live in urban areas or beyond.

This group is very touched by the advancement of information technology, they use advanced technological tools well, ranging from cellphones, laptops, tablets and various other gadgets. They are also very fluent in the use of social media facilities and networks, such as, twitter, facebook, linked in, and so on. They are very open to learning things that are new, critical and also independent.

Novice voter groups face formidable challenges, ranging from political changes and domestic problems that are not clear in the direction of resolution to the pressures of globalization, free trade, terrorism, international intervention, and so on. The differences in traits and characters, backgrounds, experiences and challenges of novice voters need to be well understood, especially to prepare for intelligent, critical and future-oriented voters. Coupled with the fact that these novice voters are the next leader in the 100th Anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia in 2045. The Republic of Indonesia will still exist at that time will be largely determined by novice voters in the general election.

The important influence of these novice voters has been realized by the Political Parties participating in the elections and their candidates. Even the hunt for novice voters has started since the elections that have been held for the past two years, namely many have begun to take into account the votes of novice voters in the campaign process so it is not uncommon for various ways to be able to collect votes from them.

The thing that should be of particular concern is the political education that is still low among these novice voters. Low political education makes this group vulnerable to being targeted for mobilization by certain interests. When referring to past experiences, for example, these young voters are often directed to one of the candidates' spouses by carrying certain contents or jargon, either through advertising wars and social media without a deep understanding of why they should choose the candidate's spouse.

The lack of knowledge of novice voters about the process of conducting elections, makes them not cast their votes in elections. Novice voters are easily influenced by certain

interests, especially by those closest to them, such as family members ranging from parents to relatives and there is still a lack of interest in novice voters to follow the explanations given by the Election Commission as the organizer to stimulate the participation of novice voters.

One of the efforts to encourage first-time voters to participate in every decision-making made by the government, is political education. Kartono (2009: 58) posits that: The task of political education is to realize the political function of each individual to become a responsible participant in the political process. The goal is that a government that exercises power and makes decisions that bind all citizens in the midst of many conflicts and differences of interests, can be influenced by the people. It is clear that in the process of political education, the people are invited to influence government politics in a democratic climate. For the participation of the people in influencing the political policies of the organs of statehood in all joints and sectors, is considered necessary. Therefore, political education can be referred to as *staatsburgelijke vorming* (citizenship-forming education).

Based on the above opinions, political education has the task of awakening individuals to participate in political activities. Political education fosters political awareness in everyone who studies it, then after realizing, they will influence government policy by participating in all political activities. This presentation is in line with the opinion of Wuryan and Syaifullah (2008:71) that: Political participation by citizens must be based on political awareness as citizens. And to grow that political awareness, political education has a very important position. Political education as one of the concepts in political science, related to how efforts or efforts are made so that citizens or society understand and understand politics.

Political education is well carried out because the benefits of political education are very influential for the sustainability of a country that adheres to a democratic system. Political education that is well implemented, planned, programmatic, directed, controlled will contribute positively to the nation.

Another opinion regarding the importance of carrying out political education well was put forward by Kartono (2009: 68) that: If the political education is done well and systematically, it will inevitably be cultivated by democratic and constructive positive counter-forces. That is to be a critical force to fight against unhealthy, bad, unjust, unstable, and unnatural conditions. Then people will try to create a more democratic and healthier climate, to make social, political, economic, cultural conditions better.

Political education is an attempt to shape a person to have political awareness. This is realized after obtaining political knowledge from both formal and non-formal institutions. Political education cannot be carried out by one educational institution alone, but all political education institutions must jointly provide political education to citizens so that citizens have political awareness. As the opinion put forward by Ruslan (2000: 89) that: Political education is the efforts devoted by educational institutions both formal and non-

formal that seek to form and cultivate a political personality that is in line with the political culture of the people engaged in the institution. Every citizen forms and grows political consciousness at all levels, and then the citizen becomes aware or acquires his own consciousness, will form and grow the ability to actively participate, in participating in solving the general problems of his society with all possible forms of participation, and ushering in better change.

Based on the opinions above, those who play a role in political education are formal and non-formal political institutions / political institutions such as families, schools, and information media. If these institutions perform their role as political educational institutions well, then the goal of political education to grow students' political awareness will be achieved. The political consciousness addressed by students is political personality, political behavior, and political participation.

David Easton and Jack Dennis (Suwama Al Muchtar, 2000: 39) in his book: "Children in the Political System" providing limitations regarding political socialization i.e. that "Political socialization is development process which persons acquire orientation and patterns of behaviour". While Fred I. Greenstein (Suwama Al Muchtar, 2000: 39) in his book: Political Socialization argues that: Political socialization is all political learning formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned, at every stage of the life cycle including not only explicit political learning but also nominally nonpolitical learning of political relevant social attitudes and the acquisition of politically relevant personality characteristics.

Both opinions above reveal that political education is a form of education that is carried out in a planned and deliberate manner both in formal and informal forms that try to teach each individual so that his attitudes and deeds can be in accordance with socially applicable rules. In this case it can be seen that political education does not only study the attitudes and behavior of individuals. But political education tries to associate the attitudes and behaviors of such individuals with the stability and existence of the political system.

In carrying out and optimizing the process of political socialization, it is necessary to have the right strategy and place where the socialization of politics is carried out, one example that as one of the means or agents where the socialization of politics is in the school environment. Schools are a vast vehicle for political socialization. As a formal educational institution, schools have enormous potential in laying the foundation for the creation of a democratic community or political life.

So far we have mostly assumed that politics and education are two things with different poles. Politics is interest-oriented whereas education actually teaches to embrace all interests so that it becomes like without interests. Therefore, the two things are always separated. Even during the new order, the word "politics" in schools, seemed to be a very scary scourge. Anything that smells of politics, in school is not a good thing to learn, even forbidden.

Perhaps most of us are afraid if politics is included and "dirty" the world of education. Or even politics makes education an extension to expand power. Many of us have misinterpreted Paulo Freire's concept of education that perpetuates pedagogy of the oppressed will occur in a world of education that has been mixed with the world of politics. In fact, the right political education can be the foundation for a person so as not to make a misstep in his world later. In the future, those who are politically educated, ideally able to become a person who dares to accept defeat, does not cheat, and understands more about the rights and obligations he has in whatever environment he lives in. This study aims to find out and analyze how political education in increasing students' political participation as novice voters.

## II. METHODS

Qualitative is the chosen form of research, arguing that researchers want to gain a deep understanding of political education in increasing students' political participation as novice voters in Singkawang City. The subjects in this study were students of XI and XII grades from 32 high schools in Singkawang City. Other data sources are the principal, PPKn teachers, Scout coaches, and the General Election Commission (KPU) of Singkawang City. The location in this study is Singkawang City in West Kalimantan. And observation, interviews, documentation, triangulation and literature studies are data collection techniques in this study.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Political education in schools must be instilled when students have begun to be able to translate and feel that he, from the point of view of a decision maker, is an object affected by the policies implemented. The concept of political education in schools can be done in simple ways. Political education in schools is more about the formation of a simple culture/culture that characterizes democracy and independence. This is the basic foundation for the realization of a democratic life later.

Politics in schools need not be construed as directly confronting students on a practical political level as befits the context of power struggles, the relationship of the ruler to the controlled. Political education in schools can start from small and simple things by highlighting the growth of a positive culture in associations. Among them are the following:

First, there is great freedom for students to express their opinions in class forums. The methods of discussion should be carried out as often as possible and not just depart from textbooks. In this case, it should be realized that scientifically nothing has absolute truth. A teacher's job is not to force his students with 'absolute truth' based on his interpretation alone. Teachers must be able to be a forum or medium for students to convey their ideas. The teacher should not immediately blame the opinions of his students. He must be able to build a rational mindset by making

arguments in opinion. Of course, this will also increase the enthusiasm and activeness of the students because students feel valued.

Second, there is fluid two-way communication between teachers and students. If we are accustomed to official and rigid ways of communication, such as when teachers teach in the classroom, then the concept of political education that must be applied is to create communication spaces that are not rigid. That way students can convey ideas freely, openly and critically. Communication that goes both ways and is not rigid obviously leads to the growth of self-confidence in students which in turn will later exercise their creativity and independence.

Third, exemplary in organizational life. School is an organizational system that includes relationships between principals, employees, teachers and students. Although various theories about organizational and social life have been presented by teachers, without direct examples even in a small scope, the theories will evaporate and only remain in the report cards of the students. How the leader should behave to subordinates or vice versa, how to work well with colleagues, cultivate an attitude of empathy and tolerance with friends, all of these can also be exemplified through the organization.

Through these simple concepts, political education can start from school. With the creation of actualization spaces for students, then later when they are maturing, they are used to the culture / culture of openness, respect plurality, live the dialectic process, give each other responses / feedback, analyze problems rationally, and respect each other's opinions without having to feel always self-righteous.

In his hugely popular book, *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey explains that one of the mistakes of teaching that occurs in schools is when school materials do not lead the students to live in the real world. It is true, educational success is when the learner actually learns for his life and even thinks about solving the problems that surround him. That is why the national awakening began with the world of education which does have the potential for a huge community changing force.

Political education does not mean directing children to certain political interests. This education actually introduces children to important political values starting from school life. They are taught how freedom of opinion and responsibility as citizens actually go through concrete examples carried out by teachers as well as in the school system itself, where education mainly occurs through communication and modeling. Similarly, with political education, it can be taught without having to create new subjects, but through exemplary as exemplified above.

Education is a forum where the formation of a new generation culture occurs. Education is the womb of every character that our children will have in the future. Thus in simple terms we can build an assumption that the improvement of society ideally will occur if we really pay attention to education, including in the political sphere. This is actually aligned with the contextual and meaningful

principle in our curriculum, which is to bring the reality of the world to learners.

The good intention to rid the world of education of the 'dirty' of politics actually increases the chances of making certain parties use education for their political interests. Let's take a simple example, in the era of the new order Pancasila as a state philosophy was taught through a single interpretation on the grounds of eliminating political biases as happened in the old order. But it is precisely that that which backfires, because the single interpretation taught is the interpretation made by the ruler.

Such an open and decentralized change in the political system suddenly made this country seem to be in shock. If the term rulers and oppressors of the new order era is they are leaders at the capital level then today oppressors and dirty politicians have spread so evenly throughout the country. A healthy and clean system of government must start from a political system that is also clean. To realize this requires a thorough reform of the political and legal system. If we can expect change to occur in the new generation, then just like the reforms carried out by Budi Utomo, it should happen in the world of education, namely education that also pays attention to political education for students.

This task is very arduous and takes time. But with improvements in the realms of politics, law and education at the same time we still have hope for a national revival. It should be noted, the national awakening in 1908 experienced the peak of the struggle for the next 37 years, namely during the independence of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945. It was not a short time and a light struggle.

In the end, the young generation who are educated in political culture are expected to one day be able to position themselves as independent pioneers, be able to respond appropriately to the policies of the leadership and understand their rights and obligations without trampling on the rights of others. Furthermore, when he became a leader, he was accustomed to a democratic culture, valued differences and treated the people he led wisely and well.

Based on the results of the questionnaire / google form, interviews and observations obtained from high school students throughout Singkawang City, it was believed that political education has an influence in increasing their political participation. The results of this study are in accordance with the opinions of (Wuryan and Syaifullah, 2007: 71). that Political participation by citizens must be based on political awareness as citizens. And to grow that political awareness, political education has a very important position. Political education conducted by families, schools and communities is influential in increasing student political participation.

The results of the questionnaire stated that political education is to increase political knowledge, as a means to increase political understanding, and as a means to increase political participation. In addition, the interview results also show that political education can increase student political participation, especially providing political knowledge and understanding to students so that they can apply it in the form of political awareness including political personality,

political behavior, and political participation. Thus, it can be known that political education has an influence in increasing the political participation of high schools students in Singkawang City.

Political education in schools is carried out through the subjects of KDP, student council, and Scouts. Political education through PPKn subjects is delivered in learning materials such as the superstructure and infrastructure of the Indonesian political system, institutions of the Republic of Indonesia according to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, good governance, citizen participation in the political system of the Republic of Indonesia and other materials. Political education in schools through the student council such as participating in basic student leadership exercises (LDKS), participating in the election of the student council president, and the formation of student council administrators. Political education through Scouting such as participating in seminars and or Scout leadership training, Scout leadership courses, following coaching by scout coaches, DKR, DKC, DKD, and other activities in Scouting.

From the results of interviews with PPKn teachers regarding political education in schools, it was revealed that in the curriculum of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) subjects there are several political materials such as the nature of the Nation and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, the superstructure and infrastructure of the political system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, citizen participation in the Indonesian political system, the 1945 Constitution of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, the security and defense system of the Republic of Indonesia, decentralization or regional autonomy in the context of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, the position and role of the central government, the position and role of local governments, the participation of citizens in maintaining the unity and unity of the nation.

PPKn teachers are required to provide understanding to students in order to increase their political awareness, and encourage them to participate in political activities at school, or in social and state life. Political education in schools is delivered through the subject of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) so that students understand the meaning of politics, political goals, political uses and are politically aware in schools in particular and in general life in society and the State.

Political education through self-development programs, among others through the student council, and Scouts are expected to be able to make students aware and participate in student council leadership, Scout leadership, activities organized by the Student Council, activities organized by Scouts.

Political education in schools, whether through KDP, student council, or Scout subjects, fosters students so that they have political awareness, and can participate in student council and Scout activities in schools proportionally. The demand is that students be ready to participate in the political life of the nation with full responsibility.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data processing and discussion of research results, it was concluded that political education has an influence in increasing the political participation of high schools students in Singkawang City. Political education in schools is carried out through KDP subjects, student council activities, Scout activities, and through election socialization carried out by the General Election Commission (KPU) of Singkawang City. Political education through KDP subjects is delivered in learning materials. Political education through student council activities such as participating in basic student leadership exercises (LDKS), election of student council presidents and administrators. Political education through Scouting such as participating in seminars and or Scout leadership training, Scout leadership courses, following coaching by scout coaches, DKR, DKC, DKD, and other activities in Scouting. This is done so that students are ready to participate in the political life of the nation with full responsibility. Political education conducted by the General Election Commission (KPU) of Singkawang City is in the form of election socialization to high schools / vocational / MA, in order to convey information about the stages and programs of organizing elections to students who have qualified as novice voters. The delivery of information to voters aims to increase voter knowledge, understanding, and awareness about elections. In addition, the Singkawang City KPU provides an election smart home that can be visited by students to find out how to vote. Students who receive this education, their political participation becomes increased marked by the ability of students to argue in the classroom, and the awareness of students participating in Intra-School Student Organizations (Student Council), Scouts, and actively participating in other Organizations in the school. The political participation of students can also be seen from the readiness of those who already qualify as novice voters, to take part in the 2024 general election.

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